

# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

*Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

*2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland*



# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Volume V

September - October, 1949

Number 4

## C O N T E N T S

Summary of Maryland Nest Records, 1949, Chandler S. Robbins . . . . .	41
Annual Business Meeting, 1949, Oliver B. Issac . . . . .	48
Baltimore Completes Local Organization Orville Crowder . . . . .	49
Worthington Valley Field Trip, June 5, Margaret Haile . . . . .	49
THE SEASON, May to August, 1949, Chandler S. Robbins . . . . .	50
Catoctin Conference Attracts 112 . . . . .	53
Club Events, May - June, Orville Crowder . . . . .	54

## OFFICERS -- OCTOBER 1, 1949

State President:  
Orville Crowder, Chase, Md.

Vice Presidents:  
Kendrick Hodgdon, Frostburg  
Dr. R.S. Stauffer, Hagerstown  
Mrs. Mabel Hoyler, Frederick  
Col. Wm. H. Triplett, Baltimore

State Treasurer:  
Mrs. Myra C. Taylor, Frostburg

State Secretary:  
Miss T. M. Sandy, University Hosp., Baltimore 1, Md.

Add'l Executive Board Members:  
Mrs. Gilbert Miller (Allegany)  
Wm. B. Green (Washington Co.)  
Miss Sarah Quinn (Frederick)  
Irving E. Hampe (Baltimore)

Committee Chairman:  
R. D. Cole, LEGISLATION  
T. C. Buck, Jr. SUPPLIES  
E. A. Andrews, Jr., HEADQUARTERS  
Robt. E. Stewart, BIRD RECORDS  
C.S. Robbins, ED. MD. BIRDLIFE

<u>MARYLAND BIRDLIFE</u>  published bi-monthly except July-August by  MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY 2101 Bolton Street Baltimore 17, Maryland	Events of September & October are reported in the November-December issue, for which closing date is Nov. 1 and publication date nor- mally Dec. 1. Send material to Editor C. S. Robbins, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Md.
--	--

# SPECIAL ARTICLES

## SUMMARY OF MARYLAND NEST RECORDS, 1949

The finding and studying of birds' nests is an activity in which all bird students can participate, and one which holds in store a wealth of fascinating experiences and an opportunity to make substantial contributions to the knowledge of the birds of our State. In few other states is there such an unusual variety of breeding birds--from golden-crowned kinglets and mourning warblers in the mountains to boat-tailed grackles and gull-billed terns along the coast. There are many interesting things still to be discovered about the breeding birds of Maryland. The nests of several of our regular breeding species, such as the saw-whet owl, golden-crowned kinglet, and Nashville, Blackburnian and mourning warblers, have not yet been discovered here. There are many commoner species whose nesting activities in this State are virtually unknown. Normal nesting dates vary from one part of Maryland to another; possibly there is a difference in incubation periods of some species at opposite ends of the State. Average clutch size may vary slightly too, as may the number of clutches laid. The heights at which many species nest in our State are imperfectly known, as are their preferences for certain species of trees or other vegetation in which to conceal their nests.

Only by pooling the notes of many active observers can certain facts about our breeding birds be unfolded. Here is an opportunity for the youngest amateur to cooperate with more experienced ornithologists and contribute valuable information on the nesting birds of Maryland. Not all of us have the opportunity of applying colored bands to the legs of birds we are studying, and thereby gathering information on successive nests of a single pair of birds as was done by Messrs. Brackbill and Hampe; but everyone can keep accurate records of dates, contents, height and location of nests, and determine the approximate incubation period and time the young birds remain in the nest. Those who are trained in the techniques of approaching nests without making them more susceptible to discovery by predators, and without causing the adults to desert, may follow the example of Rod Smith and determine exact incubation periods by carefully numbering each egg as it is laid and then, when hatching time approaches, visiting the nest frequently enough to discover when each numbered egg hatches.

The following summary contains notes on 98 species, for which proof of nesting was submitted in 1949. An effort was made to

select from the 375 records submitted those notes on each species which were of the most interest.

GREAT BLUE HERON. About 15 nests, Mar. 20, Fairhaven (Mrs.W.L.Hunt).

MALLARD. Female incubating 14 eggs in open, slanting stump surrounded by water at Marshall Dierssen Sanctuary near Pennyfield Lock east of Seneca, Mar. 20 (Napier Shelton); on May 21, Frank C. Cross observed broods of 2, 2 and 3 birds there. On May 7, W. W. Rubey saw a female with 3 downy young at Dalecarlia Reservoir.

BLACK DUCK. W. Steele Webster reported broods of 10, 12 and 8 young at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge as early as Apr. 8.

WOOD DUCK. At Hyattsville, first set of eggs, Mar. 15, and second set (11 eggs) on May 19 (Brooke Meanley). Broods noted at other localities as follows: brood of 14 at Seneca, May 4 (Charles N. Mason), and 12 on May 14 (Dr. L. M. Ashley); 16 at Sycamore Is., May 9 (Irston R. Barnes); 11 at Little Falls, May 14 (Philip A. DuMont); 1 on Monocacy River, Frederick Co., May 14 (Meanley).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK. Nest 60 ft. up in an oak at Pikesville was used for the second consecutive year; adult first seen on nest on Mar. 12, 3 young first seen on Apr. 16 and ready to leave the nest on May 22 ( Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Kuch). At Relay, Baltimore Co., an adult was incubating 50 ft. up in a sycamore, Mar. 27(I.E.Hampe).

OSPREY. 2 young, nearly ready to fly, in nest 12 ft. over water on channel marker in Sinepuxent Bay, July 9 (E.Arnold, C.S.Robbins).

SPARROW HAWK. 1 at nest site in top of tall dead chestnut in Woodside section of Silver Spring, Apr. 9 (John H. Fales).

BOB-WHITE. A nest and eggs were burned out in a field at Hanover, Anne Arundel Co., on the extremely early date of Apr. 3 (Hampe). A nest that contained 7 eggs at Tacoma Park on July 3 had 11 on July 10 (W. Bryant Tyrrell). Covey of very small young seen at Takoma Park on the late date of Sept. 25 (fide Tyrrell).

KING RAIL. The first Maryland nesting record west of the coastal plain was recorded by Cross in The Wood Thrush (Vol. 5, p. 26). On the early date of May 21, Mr. Cross observed an adult rail at Seneca, which by its actions had young; these young were seen 8 days later together with the adult, and were again noted in June.

PIPING PLOVER. Nest with 4 eggs at West Ocean City, May 21 (M.O.S. trip). Late downy young caught by hand and banded near Green Run, Assateague Island, on July 23 (John H. Buckalew, Robbins); late.

KILLDEER. Brood of 4 hatched at Patuxent, May 24 or 25 (R.T. Mitchell).

WOODCOCK. Nest with 4 eggs near Relay, Mar.9-20 (R.M.Bowen,Hampe).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER. Tiny young banded on channel island in Sinepuxent Bay near marker #11 on July 9 (Robbins and Arnold); late.

GULL-BILLED TERN. 1 egg and 1 young just hatched on channel island in Sinepuxent Bay near South Point, July 9; clutch of 2 eggs, and 3 young nearly able to fly found on July 10 on other islands near South Point (Robbins, Arnold).

COMMON TERN. All stages, from eggs to young just on the wing, found on July 9-10 in Sinepuxent Bay area; 343 banded (Robbins, Arnold).

LEAST TERN. Young in all stages of development, and several clutches of 2 eggs on Sinepuxent Bay islands, July 9-10; 76 banded (R, A).

ROYAL TERN. First Maryland nest record established independently by Buckalew, and Arnold and Robbins; details to be published later.

BLACK SKIMMER. 172 young banded on Sinepuxent Bay islands, July 9-10, none yet on the wing; many eggs not yet hatched (Robbins).

MOURNING DOVE. Late nests: 1 young in nest, Blackwater Refuge, Sept. 1 (W.S.Webster); adult on nest at Laytonsville, Sept. 21 (Tommy Low).

BARN OWL. 5 young about 2 weeks old in McGraw Island tower at Blackwater Refuge, May 17 (W.S.Webster). Nest with 5 young 20 ft. up in old tree at Denton, Aug. 15 (Mrs. Roberta Fletcher).

SCREECH OWL. 4 half-grown young, Frederick, Apr. 27 (Rod Smith).

HORNED OWL. Young out of nest at Loch Raven, Apr. 15 (D. E. Davis).

BARRED OWL. Adult took mouse to noisy young in hole 30 ft. up in beech tree at Patuxent Refuge, Apr. 22 (Robbins); another nest, 2 young  $1\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grown, 25 ft. up in beech, Apr. 27 (Stewart).

CHIMNEY SWIFT. Young first heard in Patuxent nest, June 22 (Robbins).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. Adult on nest 30 ft. over water in river birch at Patuxent, May 24 (Robbins). Incubating on May 17 at College Park (Meanley).

KINGFISHER. Feeding young in Denton nest, June 2 (Mrs. Fletcher).

FLICKER. Excavating at Denton on Apr. 28 (Mrs. Fletcher). Working on Loch Raven nest hole on May 7 (Haven Kolb). Rob Smith found 7 flicker eggs in nest previously used by Frederick Screech owls.

PILEATED WOODPECKER. Incubating in stub 25 ft. up at Glen Echo on Apr. 17; 2 young out of the nest seen on May 28 (P. A. DuMont).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER. Female at Loch Raven nest hole, May 7 (Kolb). First flying young at Patuxent on June 7 (Robbins).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. Begging juvenile on the wing in northwest Baltimore on July 30 (Hervey Brackbill).

- DOWNY WOODPECKER. Adult feeding young in Towson nest, May 28 (Kolb). First young out of nest at Patuxent, May 31 (Robbins); large juvenile being fed by adults at Baltimore, June 5-15 (Brackbill).
- EASTERN KINGBIRD. Incubating at Loch Raven, June 11 (Kolb), and at Patuxent, June 26 (Robbins). 3 eggs, Patuxent, July 15 (Mitchell).
- CRESTED FLYCATCHER. 4 young left nest 4 ft. up in tin newspaper box at Patuxent Refuge, July 4 or 5 (Michael Dubik).
- PHOEBE. Pikesville phoebes were rebuilding their nest on Apr. 2, and on May 22 the young were ready to leave (Kuch). Of particular interest was Brackbill's first nest for NW Baltimore in more than 10 years of observation; 5 young about a week old were in the nest on June 8. Four young left a Patuxent nest on May 18 or 19; a second clutch of 4 eggs was in the nest, June 3 (R.).
- LEAST FLYCATCHER. Arthur Wright found an occupied nest 25 ft. up in a Friendsville apple tree, about Aug. 15. Details of first Patuxent Refuge nest will be published elsewhere (Robbins).
- WOOD PEWEE. 2 young from Woodside nest being fed, Sept. 8 (Fales).
- HORNED LARK. Young out of Ocean City nest, Apr. 16 (Stewart); 4 young in nest at College Park on May 1 (Meanley).
- TREE SWALLOW. Going into nest holes at Ocean City, May 21 (M.O.S.).
- ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW. Feeding young in nest hole 10 ft. up in a clay bank at Denton, May 30 (Mrs. Fletcher).
- BARN SWALLOW. 5 young in a very early Patuxent nest were about 3 days old on May 18, and left the nest when approached on June 3 (Robbins). Building at Denton, May 19 (Mrs. Fletcher). The last 2 Patuxent broods (4 and 5) hatched soon after July 21 (Robbins).
- CLIFF SWALLOW. 10 nests completed, others still being built at colony west of Bittering, Garrett Co., on May 28 (Barnes, Robbins).
- PURPLE MARTIN. Building at Denton, Apr. 28 (Mrs. Fletcher). Two Laurel boxes of Thomas B. Israel had 29 out of 40 cells occupied; clutch sizes ranged from 1 to 5 and averaged  $3\frac{1}{2}$  (Robbins).
- BLUE JAY. Building in Baltimore on Apr. 7: young still begging food from adults as late as Aug. 28 (Brackbill). Young just out of the nest at Govans, Baltimore, on June 24 (Kolb).
- BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE. Bird flushed from nest 10 ft. up in dead yellow birch stub in Swallow Falls State Forest on May 29 (Barnes, Robbins). Pair excavating nest 10 ft. up in dead yellow birch stub near Roth Rock fire tower on June 26 (Robbins).
- CAROLINA CHICKADEE. Began building on Apr. 17 at Denton (Mrs. Fletcher). Broods of 6 hatched at Beltsville on Apr. 30 and



Patuxent on May 19 (Robbins); first broods out of nest at Patuxent and Tacoma Park, May 26 (Robbins, Tyrrell). Three young out of the nest at La Plata, Charles Co., May 21 (A.R. Stickley, Jr.).

TUFTED TITMOUSE. Building May 7 in Pikesville nest box 6 ft. from ground; 5 eggs on May 14; young left June 9 (Kuches). In northwest Baltimore, Brackbill saw poorly-flying young on May 25.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH. 2 taking food to Woodside nest, Apr. 30 (Fales). Young flying at Cabin John, June 4 (Donald M. Thatcher).

HOUSE WREN. At Patuxent Refuge the first full clutch (7 eggs) was found on May 16; the last clutch hatched on July 27 (Mitchell).

CAROLINA WREN. 2 eggs at Pikesville on Apr. 5, very early (Kuch). 4 young left a Halethorpe nest on May 4 (Hampe).

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN. Small young in nest at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Aug. 18, very late (David E. Davis).

MOCKINGBIRD. First young out of Patuxent nest, May 12 (P.F. Springer). 1 young recently out of nest seen at Woodside, Sept. 1 (Fales).

CATBIRD. Dickeyville nest with 4 eggs on June 8; another with 1 young, June 12 (Brackbill). Two broods of 3 still in Beltsville nests, July 31 (Robbinses). Female still carrying raisins from Brackbill feeding station to presumed second brood, Sept. 10.

BROWN THRASHER. Rod Smith numbered eggs laid on Apr. 28, 29, 30 and May 1 at Frederick; #1 hatched May 12, #2 and #3 and then #4 on May 13; all left nest May 25. Pikesville nest completed Apr. 30; 4th egg laid May 5; none hatched; nest abandoned May 20 (Kuch).

ROBIN. Building in NW Baltimore, Apr. 1; 4 eggs on Apr. 17, began hatching Apr. 28 (Brackbill). Clutch of 4 completed May 1 at Takoma; 3 young left, May 23 (Tyrrell). Young flying at Bittering May 28 (Robbins). Late NW Baltimore brood left July 24 (Brackbill).

WOOD THRUSH. Record of one color-banded pair in Northwest Baltimore: 4 eggs laid May 12-15, nest deserted May 23 after slipping during heavy storm; second nest with 3 eggs found June 1, both hatched June 12, young left nest June 24; 4 eggs laid July 3-6, hatched July 17-18, all young left nest prematurely July 28 (Brackbill). Takoma Park nest started May 6, finished May 7, 4 eggs May 8-11, 3 young left nest June 7 (Tyrrell). Egg hatching May 29, Cranesville bog; young just out of Swallow Falls nest June 12 (Robbins).

BLUEBIRD. First eggs hatched at Patuxent Apr. 27 (Mitchell). First young fledged May 19 at Denton (Mrs. Fletcher) and Unity (Packard). Young still in Patuxent nest July 29 (W.H. Stickel), gone July 30.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER. Building on Apr. 16 along Pocomoke River at Whiton's Crossing (Buckalew). Nest completed on Apr. 23 at Seneca (Cross). A pair at Seneca repairing nest for second brood

on May 14 (L. M. Ashley). Young left Patuxent nest on May 31 or June 1 (Robbins), and were about to leave a nest 75 ft. up in a black walnut at Cabin John on June 4 (Thatcher).

CEDAR WAXWING. Nest at Patuxent built June 8-10, deserted (Robbins).

WHITE-EYED VIREO. Building on Apr. 16 at Whiton's Crossing and at Snow Hill; 4 eggs in each nest on Apr. 25 (Buckalew). Brood of 4 left nest 4 ft. up in red maple at Patuxent, June 9 (Mitchell).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO. Building near Snow Hill, Apr. 19 (Buckalew). Young prematurely out of Patuxent nest, June 9 (C. Webster, Robbins).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO. Four young  $2\frac{2}{3}$  grown in Swallow Falls nest  $10\frac{1}{2}$  ft. up in a hemlock, June 25 (Robbins). Another pair building 17 ft. up in a sugar maple  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away (Jerram Brown).

RED-EYED VIREO. 1 half-grown young and 1 sterile egg  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ft. up in witch hazel at Swallow Falls, June 25 (J. Brown). Adults feeding young just out of the nest on Sugarloaf Mountain, Sept. 8 (Fales).

STARLING. Clutch of 4 found at Patuxent, Apr. 12, hatched about Apr. 21; latest brood hatched June 6 or 7 (Springer, Mitchell). Adults last seen feeding flying young in Baltimore, July 17 (Brackbill).

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER. At Seneca, 4 eggs on May 22, young out of nest June 6; large young in another box June 8 (Tyrrell). Young out of nest on May 31 at Denton (Mrs. Fletcher).

PARULA WARBLER. Building nest beneath loose bark on the trunk of a river birch in College Park, May 8 (Meanley).

NASHVILLE WARBLER. Pair scolding, and carrying food at Cranesville bog, June 12, but nest not found (Robbins).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER. 2 young banded in Swallow Falls nest, June 13; 2 flying broods being fed at Herrington Manor, June 26 (Robbins).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER. At Swallow Falls on June 25, 1 young out of nest, and 2 half-grown young in another nest (Robbins).

BLACK-THR. GREEN WARBLER. 2 young flying, Swallow Falls, June 12; 2 fledglings begging food at Herrington Manor, June 26 (Robbins).

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER. Female with food scolding at Swallow Falls on June 25 (Robbins). Although this species breeds commonly at Swallow Falls, its nest has not yet been found in Maryland.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER. Female incubating 4 eggs 15 inches up in a blackberry tangle near Roth Rock tower, May 30 (Barnes).

PRAIRIE WARBLER. 5 young about 2 days old in Beltsville nest, May 25, could barely fly on June 4 (Robbinses). Broods of 2 and 4 left Patuxent nests June 7 and June 22, respectively (Mitchell).



- OVEN-BIRD. Young just out of nest at Swallow Falls, June 25 (Brown).
- NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH. 1 egg, 3 young just hatched in Cranesville nest, May 29; nest empty but adults scolding, June 11 (Barnes, Robbins). Young just out of Swallow Falls nest, June 25 (Robbins).
- MORNING WARBLER. Adults with food scolding near Roth Rock tower, June 26; nest not located despite long search (Robbins).
- YELLOW-THROAT. 4 young in Loch Raven nest, June 4 (Kolb). 4 young left Patuxent nest, June 15 (Mitchell). Two broods of flying young near Negro Mountain fire tower, June 27 (Robbins).
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT. Broods of 3 hatched in 2 Patuxent nests on June 20 and 22, young left on June 29 and so respectively; 3 other nests with clutches of 3, 4 and 4 were unsuccessful (Mitchell).
- HOODED WARBLER. Young out of nest at Cabin John, June 4 (Thatcher).
- CANADA WARBLER. Carrying food at Swallow Falls, June 25 (Robbins).
- REDSTART. Building at Whiton's Crossing, Apr. 19; 4 eggs on Apr. 25 (Buckalew). 2 young in Cabin John nest on June 4 (Thatcher).
- RED-WING. 3 eggs in nest at Bethlehem on June 18 (Robbins).
- ORCHARD ORIOLE. Young left nest 20 ft. up in walnut tree at Denton on the extraordinarily late date of Aug. 31 (Mrs. Fletcher).
- BALTIMORE ORIOLE. Nest built entirely of string was made at Denton, May 9-16, 30 ft. up in a maple tree (Mrs. Fletcher). Young were being fed in a nest at Wiltondale, Baltimore Co., June 13 (Strack).
- PURPLE GRACKLE. One young bird was learning to fly at a LaPlata colony as early as May 21 (Stickley).
- COWBIRD. Fledgling fed by Carolina wren at Fairbank, Talbot Co., June 18; fledgling fed by pair of magnolia warblers at Swallow Falls, June 13; large young in prairie warbler nest at Smithville, Caroline Co., June 18 (Robbins). 1 egg in nest with 3 yellow-throat eggs at Patuxent, June 8 (Mitchell). 1 egg on May 8 in Denton chipping sparrow nest, young bird removed May 15 (Fletcher). 1 egg in Patuxent nest with 2 young cardinals, May 25 (Mitchell).
- SCARLET Tanager. Young left Pikesville nest on June 13 (Kuch).
- CARDINAL. Early nest with 2 eggs at Dickeyville, Apr. 10; deserted (Brackbill). Eggs laid on May 6, 7 and 8 in Pikesville nest which had been found on Apr. 28; 3 young on May 24; 2 left successfully (Kuch). Full-grown young still being fed Sept. 10 at Denton (Mrs. Fletcher), and Sept. 14 in NW Baltimore (Brackbill).
- INDIGO BUNTING. 2 eggs in Patuxent nest on June 8; later deserted (Mitchell). 3 young in another Patuxent nest, June 29 (Robbins).

- PURPLE FINCH. 5 eggs 23 ft. up in red spruce in Cranesville bog, May 29; 2 young banded June 12; 2 others had evidently been killed by maggots; 1 sterile egg collected; first Md. nest record (Robbins).
- GOLDFINCH. 3 young in late Bethesda nest, Sept. 25 (T.W.L.Scheltema).
- TOWHEE. 4 eggs at Patuxent on May 16 (Grizzell); 3 eggs at Pikesville on May 25 (Kuch); 4 eggs at Beltsville on June 3 (Pales).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW. 5 eggs near Burtonsville, June 11 (F. Thompson, Tyrrell). Feeding young out of Denton nest, Sept. 1 (Fletcher).
- VESPER SPARROW. Feeding young in Frederick Valley, May 14 (Meanley).
- JUNCO. Feeding young out of nest at Roth Rock, June 26 (Robbins).
- CHIPPING SPARROW. 4 eggs on May 3 at Denton (Mrs. Fletcher). Young still in Patuxent nest on July 15 (Mitchell).
- FIELD SPARROW. 3 young (from clutch of 4 eggs) left Patuxent nest prematurely, May 19 (Robbins). 3 young that hatched at Patuxent on June 23 left nest June 30 (Mitchell).
- SWAMP SPARROW. 3 eggs 2½ ft. up in narrowleaf meadowsweet (Spiraea alba) at Herrington Manor on June 13 (Robbins).
- SONG SPARROW. History of color-banded pair at Halethorpe: nest built Apr. 14-20; 1 egg Apr. 21; 4 eggs Apr. 25; 3 young hatched May 7 (1 egg infertile); nest empty next day; 4 eggs laid in same nest June 19-22, deserted within 4 days (Hampe).

Chandler S. Robbins

#### ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, MAY 14, 1949

This year's annual meeting during the Catoctin Conference took the form of two sessions - one on Saturday evening, the other on Sunday morning under the pleasant surroundings of the camp council ring. The meeting was of more than usual interest, since it completed the changes necessary to give us a true statewide organizational structure.

Mr. Crowder opened the meeting, and summarized club activities of the year. Kendrick Hodgdon, Mrs. Helen Miller, Dr. & Mrs. Stauffer and Mrs. Mabel Hoyler reported on activities in the western counties. The treasurer's report showed a bank balance of \$1,156.31. The proposed new state constitution was then presented, as drafted by the committee and previously mailed to members. In the ensuing discussion, four detail changes were agreed upon, and the constitution adopted by unanimous vote. The president then appointed a nominating committee, and the session adjourned until the next day to permit the committee to submit a slate.

The reconvened meeting on Sunday, received the report of the nominating committee and unanimously elected Orville Crowder as State Treasurer, and Miss T. M. Sandy as State Treasurer.

Oliver B. Isaac

## BALTIMORE COMPLETES LOCAL ORGANIZATION

In line with the new pattern of statewide organization of the Society adopted at the annual meeting in May, Baltimore members assembled June 17 and formally organized as a "local unit". By-laws were adopted, tying in with the state constitution, and the following officers elected:

President	- Col. Wm. H. Triplett
Vice President	- Seth H. Low
Secretary	- Miss T. M. Sandy
Asst. Sec'y.	- Oliver B. Isaac
Treasurer	- Richard D. Cole

Additional members of the Executive Council included Miss Ruth E. Lenderking, Mrs. Herman F. Kuch, Jr., W. Bryant Tyrrell, A. Ogden Ramsay, Edward H. LaFleur and Herbert P. Strack.

The meeting decided that the Baltimore Unit could get along without charging dues, relying upon profit from the paid lecture program to carry all current expenses. Thus, Baltimore members will pay only the \$1 annual statewide dues which have remained unchanged since organization of the Society. At a subsequent meeting the formal name of the unit was agreed upon as "Baltimore Club of the Maryland Ornithological Society".

Although the Baltimore Club officially takes its position as a unit on equal footing with the Allegany, Washington County and Frederick groups, it will doubtless continue to be regarded as the "parent" unit of the Society. Approximately one-half of our 600 members are included in the Baltimore Club. The Baltimore meetings will continue to present programs of broad interest and be a Mecca for all members of the Society who can make the trip to Baltimore. Field trips operated from Baltimore will follow the pattern of the statewide trips previously offered, and all members of the Society are urged to come when they can. Miss Florence Burner, who has for several years so successfully presided over the field trip program, with all its attendant labor and woes, has been persuaded to continue for the coming season.

We welcome Col. Triplett and his able corps of officers to a top place in the ranks of those who are giving their time and energy so that all of us may enjoy our birding more fully.

Orville Crowder

WORTHINGTON VALLEY FIELD TRIP, June 5. A group of 12 members found the upland plover in the same location as last year but to our disappointment, no cliff swallows had built under the eaves of the Vanderbilt barn this year. We found 9 different warblers, including the chestnut-sided. Along a fence were woodchucks - a mother and baby--sunning themselves at their front (or back?) doors. With 36 species of birds on our lists we left the meadows and woods and drove to York Road, a mile north of Cockeysville, where we found some 22 more species. We examined a yellow warbler's nest found lying on the ground. It seemed to be two stories high and, sure enough, in the lower section was a cowbird's egg, completely covered by the upper nest.

# THE SEASON

May, June, July, August, 1949

Marylanders were not the only people who complained that the May migration of 1949 was an especially dull one. From the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Coast the weather was uniformly warm and balmy at the time when field ornithologists were hoping for some well-spaced cool snaps. But the cool snaps did not arrive. Instead of being concentrated in the usual "waves" on warm mornings that were preceeded by a few cool days and nights, our migrant warblers, thrushes, vireos and flycatchers trickled through in a light but steady procession and were not once concentrated in the large and varied flocks that we so look forward to finding. The nesting season is summarized in a separate article, so will be referred to but briefly here.

The fall shorebird migration was as exciting as usual, and several species arrived early. Until we have some regular correspondents from areas along the coast it will not be possible to make dogmatic comments to the effect that certain species are more or less common than in other years. Although observers from other parts of the State make trips to the coast two or three times a month, these infrequent samples of the shorebird migration can give only hints as to the bird activity of that area.

Shearwaters, Gannets, Cormorants. The least known of Maryland birds are the pelagic species such as shearwaters, petrels, phalaropes and jaegers. These are usually found far from land, and consequently are seldom seen by bird students except when a boat is hired and a group spends an entire day at sea. During easterly storms, however, some of these birds are blown close to shore and may then be spotted by the alert ornithologist. Such was the case on May 9 and 10, when Dr. Edwin G. Davis, Ernest Baldwin and Robert Beaton observed 5 or 6 greater shearwaters (second record for Maryland) from the third floor of the Hastings Hotel at Ocean City. They were surprised to see a similar number on May 12 and 13 when the wind had shifted to the southwest. Then on May 14, they saw 3 very late gannets from Assateague Island. The double-crested cormorant is an abundant bird in migration along the coast; yet west of our tidewater regions few observations have been recorded. On May 14 this species was discovered at Seneca by Charles N. Mason and Napier Shelton, and 7 days later 3 were found there by Frank Cross, May M. Snow, Jennie S. Moon and Ruth J. Wright.

Geese and Ducks. On May 6 Irston Barnes, Enoch Johnson, Karl Weber and Chandler Robbins found a blue goose among tame mallards at the Marshall Dierssen game refuge near Seneca; they saw it again on



the following day, and on the 8th it was last seen by Mrs. Wright. This is by far the latest date on which this rare species has been found in Maryland. Other waterfowl which were represented by late stragglers include the Mallard (2 at Ocean City on May 14, Davis and party), Baldpate (2 on May 21 at Pennyfield, Cross and Mesdames Moon, Snow and Wright), Blue-winged Teal (4 on May 14 at Seneca, Dr. Lawrence M. Ashley), Redhead (1 drake on May 20 at Kent Island, Seth Low and Robbins), Canvas-back (single birds at Patuxent Refuge on May 15-16 by Clark Webster and Francis Uhler and on May 28 by Robert Stewart), Buffle-head (1 female on May 28 at Patuxent, Stewart), American Eider (1 at Ocean City on May 15 by Cutler and Cadbury--see Audubon Field Notes 3:203-4), Lesser Scaup and Ruddy Duck (1 each at Lake Louise, Garrett Co., on May 28 by Barnes and Robbins), Hooded Merganser (1 on May 23 at Patuxent, Stewart), and American Merganser (1 on May 14 at Ocean City, Davis and party). Although cripples of any waterfowl species may summer in Maryland, most of the above records are from areas under frequent observation, and the birds apparently were not cripples.

Shorebirds. There were few outstanding shorebird records during the spring migration; this was partly because of the small number of trips to the coast, and partly because the spring migration is far less spectacular than the fall flight in the Ocean City area. Messrs. Davis, Beaton and Baldwin saw 2 American oyster-catchers at Assateague Island on May 14; there were only 3 or 4 previous records of this species for Maryland. On May 8, Duvall Jones found 5 dowitchers and 34 pectoral sandpipers near Essex. Two red-backed sandpipers and 2 white-rumped sandpipers seen at Ocean City on June 11 and 12, respectively, by Blair Willison constitute the latest spring records for the State. Less than a month later the fall flight was under way; on July 10 Elting Arnold and Robbins found a semipalmated plover at Ocean City, a Hudsonian curlew at South Point and a flock of 18 willets flying over Sinepuxent Bay. On July 23, John H. Buckalew and Robbins recorded 18 species of shorebirds on Assateague Island; of special interest were early records for the ruddy turnstone (1), red-backed sandpiper (1), stilt sandpiper (4) and marbled godwit (1). Once more, the flats a few hundred yards north of the tip of Sandy Point (included in the area recently acquired for Sandy Point State Park) proved to be one of the best shorebird areas on the Western Shore. Here, on July 31, John Willoughby found a dowitcher, a red-backed sandpiper and a willet; 7 days later, Charles N. Mason discovered 4 willets at the same place. The most interesting shorebird record was a male Wilson's phalarope collected on Assateague Island by Buckalew on Aug. 3 (Wood Thrush 5:26). Of the three phalaropes in the world (and all 3 have been recorded from Maryland), this was the least likely to turn up on our coast; it breeds in the western United States but wanders eastward in small numbers and should be watched for in such places as the fish hatcheries in the Frederick Valley.

Gulls and Terns. An immature black-backed gull was seen on the May 21 Ocean City trip, and as early as Aug. 6, 2 were noted on Chincoteague Refuge just south of our boundary. This species is now summering (not breeding) as far south as New Jersey, and stray birds,



particularly in immature plumage, may soon begin to summer along the Maryland coast. George F. Kelly (Audubon Field Notes 3:232) reported 3 royal terns at Solomons on July 20--a very early date for Chesapeake Bay. Caspian terns are quite regular at Ocean City in fall, and are frequently found at the west tip of Elliott Island in both spring and fall. A few are reported each year from other parts of Chesapeake Bay, and further observation may reveal additional places where this species occurs with some regularity. Records for the present period were as follows: 2 each at Elliott Island and Ocean City, May 6 (Stewart, Low and Paul Springer); 1 at Ocean City, May 7 (Barnes, Johnson and Robbins); a few at Assateague on June 4 (T.R. Hake and Rev. Arnold); 3 at Wilson Point near Middle River on May 7 (Larry L. Haynie); and 1 at Sandy Point on Aug. 7, very early (Mason). Least terns which attempted to nest within the new city limits of Ocean City suffered havoc from the depredations of dogs. On the other hand, there was a considerable increase of least terns on some of the islands in Sinepuxent Bay. Even there the terns and skimmers lead a precarious life due to frequent visits from the curious public and to occasional damage inflicted by dogs and illegal shooting. Nearly every year sees one or more tern colonies wiped out as a direct result of human interference. Two black terns were found as early as May 1 at Seneca by Karl Weber and Dr. J. Andrews, and 2 were seen there again on May 7 by Barnes, Johnson and Robbins.

Swallows, Nuthatches, Wrens. Tree swallows (15) were still migrating northward as late as May 28 at Sycamore Island (Philip A. DuMont), and by July 24 a few hundred had already gathered in the fields and marshes near Vienna. The only report of cliff swallows on migration was received from Ruth Wright, who saw 3 at Seneca on May 9. Paul Springer heard a very late red-breasted nuthatch at Patuxent Refuge on May 23. A short-billed marsh wren remained at Patuxent as late as June 8 (Robbins), and on Aug. 20 and 21 Seth Low heard 3 very early migrants singing at his home in Unity.

Warblers. Due to the lack of pronounced 'waves' in spring, no spectacular counts of warblers were received; nor were there many extremely early or late dates worth mentioning. Tennessee warblers were reported as far east as Glen Echo (May 9, Cross), Woodside (May 8, Fales), and Unity (May 19, Fred M. Packard). The Nashville warbler was found east to Seneca (2 on May 7, Frank Sommer and Evans Roberts) and Patuxent Refuge (May 3 and 25, Robbins). The Cape May was found only at Seneca (May 7, Robbins), Unity (May 4, Packard), and Patuxent (May 10, Springer). The bay-breast was observed east to Glen Echo (May 21, DuMont), Woodside (2, May 7, Fales), Unity May 13, Packard), and Mt. Airy (May 7, Paul E. Taylor). The only mourning warblers were found near Essex on May 8 (Jones), at Gibson Island on May 18 (Mrs. Frederick H. Vinup), and at Patuxent on May 26 (Springer). An interesting summer record was the finding of 2 prairie warblers on the Allegheny Plateau near Herrington Manor between June 18 and 25 by Arthur Wright. The fall migration of warblers started in earnest on Aug. 20 and 21, when the minimum temperature in Washington dropped below normal for the first time since July 9! Prior to this cool snap, the blue-winged warbler (Aug. 13), Canada warbler (5 on Aug. 13) and Blackburnian warbler

(Aug. 19) were seen at Patuxent Refuge by Stewart. The chestnut-sided and Wilson's warblers arrived there on the 20th, and on the 21st Stewart and Robbins recorded 2 transient worm-eating warblers, 2 blue-wings, 2 magnolias, 2 chestnut-sides and 2 very early black-throated green warblers.

Finches and Sparrows. Low and Robbins observed the last pine siskin at Patuxent on May 2. None were reported from the central or eastern part of the State after this date; but on May 29 a single bird flew over Barnes and Robbins at Cranesville bog. Brooke Meanley and Gorman Bond obtained a specimen of the dickcissel at Doubs, Frederick Co., on May 21, and observed a blue grosbeak there on the same date. A Savannah sparrow remained at Patuxent Refuge until the late date of May 19 (Robbins), and on July 31 John Willoughby found 2 at Sandy Point--a month and a half before the beginning of southward migration. Since this northern species breeds south locally to the Frederick Valley and Assateague Island, it is possible that it nests sparingly at Sandy Point and other places where the habitat is suitable. This is one of many instances where the sharp-eyed bird student can make important contributions to our knowledge of Maryland birds.

C. S. Robbins

#### CATOCTIN CONFERENCE ATTRACTS 112

The second annual state-wide meeting of the Society at Catoctin this year brought together 112 members for 3 days of meetings, study groups, field trips, grand camp meals, and general good fellowship. All local units were well represented, and many friendships were renewed as members from eastern and western ends of the state met face-to-face after the lapse of a year since the last reunion.

Camp Greentop in Frederick County's 1800-foot Catoctin Mountains continued as "state capital" of the Ornithological Society. Miss Mary Church, who directs the camp in summer as executive secretary of the Maryland League for Crippled Children, was again our cordial hostess. Dorothy Watson, popular and successful volunteer chef, once more contributed her time and energy.

Festivities started with campfire songs and stories Friday night. Saturday at 6 A.M. the early birders began the day with coffee and doughnuts and a pre-breakfast warbler walk. Then followed two days of field trips; burying and dis-interring the bean-hole beans; small group instruction periods in bird song, bird photography, bird banding and plant identification; a hike to Cunningham Falls for lunch; a good old-fashioned Saturday night square dance; an astronomy class; a lecture by Bryant Tyrrell with some of his fine color movies; two business meetings (reported elsewhere); more bird walks; more good food; more good fellowship; and finally a hike to Raven Rock, where the session came to an end with picnic lunch atop the summit rocks of the mountain with the Monocacy Valley spread at our feet.

If you missed the Catoctin Conference this year, by all means mark your 1950 calendar now for the second week-end in May, and share with us a grand experience.